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# **GEORGIA AGRICULTURAL FACTS**

## **2003 EDITION**

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**Thomas T. Irvin, Commissioner**

**Cooperating with**

### **UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**National Agricultural Statistics Service**

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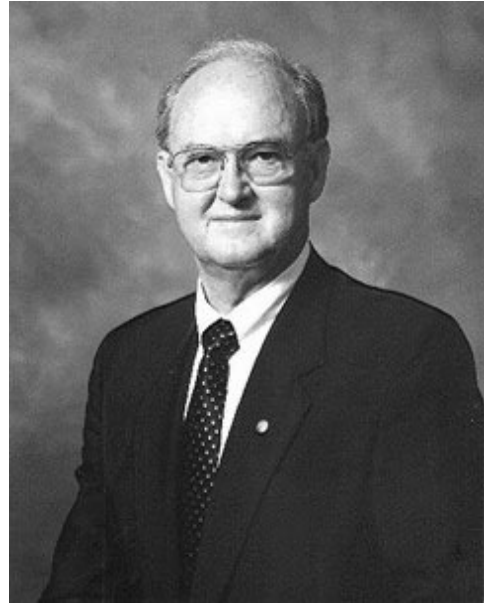
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## ***A Message From Commissioner Irvin***

Dear Fellow Georgians:

The Georgia Department of Agriculture is proud to publish **Georgia Agricultural Facts 2003 Edition** in cooperation with the Georgia Agricultural Statistics Service. This edition comes at the end of a four-year drought and at the two-year anniversary of terrorist attacks on our soil. We always should view statistical data in context, but we should be even more aware now of global context.

Comparison of statistical data over a period of time mirrors the changing face of agriculture. One can recognize the year-to-year changes which are cyclical and those trends that have become permanent conditions. One can hear the voice of the farmers, agribusiness owners, County Extension officials, and the many others in the agricultural economy who voluntarily contributed to the collection of the information presented here.



Use the information for research and as a reference guide. But remember to study the data in context of what was happening during the planting, growing and harvesting seasons. You also should relate the information to any available current statistics and information. The Georgia Agricultural Statistics Service continuously updates data as do other state divisions of the National Agricultural Statistics Service and provides the current information online. The Georgia Department of Agriculture website [www.agr.state.ga.us](http://www.agr.state.ga.us) provides a link to the statistics as well as many other sources of information.

Sincerely,

Tommy Irvin  
Commissioner  
Georgia Department of Agriculture

# FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to present the “2003 Georgia Agricultural Facts,” Georgia’s annual overview of the productivity and success of our agricultural industry. The past year has seen the need for information in decision making escalate to a new plateau. Data are necessary to accomplish the requirements of operating the ever increasing complexity of a successful agricultural operation. The request for more information to use in planning and marketing continues. Without the voluntary reporting from thousands of Georgia farm operations, these data or this publication would not be possible.

Our agency has just finished the data collection phase of the 2002 Census of Agriculture. The Census of Agriculture, taken every 5 years, is the only source of information on demographics and changes in local agriculture. We attempted to contact every agricultural operation in the state in the first six months of 2002. Our office will analyze the data and summarize it at the state and county level and will begin a release of the data in late February 2004.

As a partner with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, our mission is to provide timely, accurate and unbiased information for everyone involved in today’s agriculture. We are proud of our efforts on behalf of Georgia Agriculture, but we are also mindful that we cannot do our jobs without the help, support and cooperation of the many farmers, ranchers, and agribusiness people in Georgia. They are the source of the information we use to provide all our statistics. Thank you for helping us serve our industry.

We hope you find the “2003 Edition of the Georgia Agricultural Facts” a useful tool in your decision making tool box. This publication, as well as other statistics, are available on line at [www.nass.usda.gov/ga/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/ga/)

Remember: Georgia counts on agriculture.

Regards,

David S. Abbe  
State Statistician

## **Georgia Department of Agriculture Mission Statement**

We at the Georgia Department of Agriculture take our responsibilities to you very seriously and are committed to providing superior agricultural products, service and leadership into the 21st century.

Our mission is to provide excellence in services and regulatory functions, to protect and promote agriculture and consumer interests, and to ensure an abundance of safe food and fiber for Georgia, America and the world by using state-of-the-art technology, and a professional workforce.

## **National Agricultural Statistics Service Mission Statement**

To provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U. S. agriculture.